

# Office Memorandum • UNITED STATES GOVERNMENT

TO : Chief, Intelligence School

DATE: 16 August 1957

FROM : Chief, Reading Improvement

SUBJECT: Study of the Readability of Memoranda in the DD/I Offices

1. Attached is a Staff Study on the readability of informal correspondence in the DD/I Offices. For your information, the history of the inquiry about readability is as follows:

a. In an interview with me on 24 Jan. 1956, the DCI asked me to submit suggestions to improve the readability of Agency memoranda.

b. I wrote brief comments which were forwarded to the DCI on 26 March 1956.

c. The paper was sent to the DD/I for comment. [redacted] recommended that we establish more thorough principles to improve writing.

d. To help us adapt specific recommendations to current practices, [redacted] addressed a memo dated 13 November 1956 to the AD's of the 7 DD/I Offices, asking each AD to designate someone to inform us about the correspondence situation in his office.

e. The AD's designated representatives, who gave us the information we requested. The Staff Study incorporates our analysis of the information.

2. If you approve the Staff Study, please forward it to [redacted]

3. [redacted] advice and assistance have been invaluable to me in conducting the study.

Approved; recom -  
mend transmittal  
to O/DDI after review  
by DDTR/DTR.

6 Aug 57

ROUTING AND RECORD SHEET

SUBJECT: (Optional)

FROM:

Director of Training  
Room 11, ☐

NO. 518 Copy

DATE 19 AUG 1957

TO: (Officer designation, room number, and building)

DATE

REC'D

FWD'D

OFFICER'S INITIALS

COMMENTS (Number each comment to show from whom to whom. Draw a line across column after each comment.)

1.

Asst. to DD/I (Plng)  
353 Admin

2.

3.

4.

5.

6.

7.

8.

9.

10.

11.

12.

13.

14.

15.

Attached are three copies of a "Study of the Readability of Memoranda in the DD/I Offices," prepared by ☐ of the Office of Training.

The background of this Study is outlined in ☐ memorandum to the Chief/Intelligence School, a copy of which is attached.

☐ consulted with the Records Management Branch of the Management Staff in planning this Study, and has now turned over her file and records to that Staff for any action it may wish to take.

M. BAIRD

16 Aug.

DTR:

I read this Study and discussed it  
briefly with [ ] Friday afternoon.  
On first reading it appears to be a  
very good job indeed. I believe it is the  
sort of thing [ ] had in mind  
and recommend that it be forwarded.  
I understand that [ ] will still  
be Assistant to the DDI until 9 September.

STAT

STAT

STAT

RBF

Chief, Intelligence School

16 August 1957

Chief, Reading Improvement

Study of the Readability of Memoranda in the DD/I Offices

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[redacted]

25X

C O N F I D E N T I A L

15 August 1957

TO: Assistant to DD/I (Planning)

SUBJECT: Informal Correspondence in the DD/I Offices

I. PROBLEM:

The problem is to determine what practical action can be taken to improve the writing of informal correspondence in DD/I Offices.

II. ASSUMPTIONS:

1. Clear writing is vitally important to saving reading time for senior executives and analysts. Agency employees spend an average of about 4 hours each day reading.

2. Poor writing may result from several causes: (a) inadequate knowledge of the subject, (b) vague understanding of the purpose for writing, or (c) careless choice of words and failure to organize ideas. We will focus on the flaws caused by careless choice of words and failure to organize ideas.

3. All of the DD/I Offices except one have editorial staffs that control the production of formal reports. We assumed, therefore, that we should focus on the informal correspondence such as memos, letters, and notes that are circulated within the offices or sent upward to the DD/I, DD/CI, and DCI. We are not directly concerned with formal publications such as the NIE's, NIS's, and the OCI Bulletin.

4. We assumed that we should judge the quality of writing in the DD/I Offices by the standards of excellence we desire for the DD/I Offices, not in comparison with other government agencies. The steps other government agencies have taken to improve their correspondence may or may not be suitable for the DD/I Offices.

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5. We assumed that writing style, organization, and format should be appropriate to the subject, purpose, and length of the correspondence. To select the most suitable action, we must know what the most common purposes, subjects, and lengths of correspondence written in the DD/I Offices are. Therefore, we asked each Office to answer 8 questions about the quantity, current guides, purposes, subjects, audiences, and quality of their informal correspondence. Annex A contains the questions.

6. We assumed that the writers in the DD/I Offices are literate. Therefore, we should analyze samples of their writing to discover flaws, rather than recommend general training or guides that would not add to the information writers already have. We asked each Office for typical samples of their current informal correspondence. We analyzed the samples for 3 aspects of readability: style of expression, organization, and format. To help evaluate style of expression, we used a quantitative formula called the Fog Index. We also applied several generally accepted criteria for clear style, organization, and format. Annex B contains a detailed description of the Fog Index and the other criteria.

III. FACTS BEARING ON THE PROBLEM:

1. We estimate that about 80,000 memos are written in the DD/I Offices yearly.

2. The Offices vary as to the number of memos they write, and in the predominant purposes and subjects of their memos. Short memos about administrative support matters, with the purposes to supply

information or request services are common in 4 Offices, while 3 of the Offices write short memos for administrative purposes.

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3. Within every DD/I Office, the readability of the informal correspondence varies from easy to difficult. Furthermore, some Offices consistently produce more readable memos than others.

4. The stilted and wordy sentence structure of Federalese has gained a foothold in 5 of the DD/I Offices.

5. There are some prevalent organizational flaws in the informal correspondence.

6. Miscellaneous notices and verbal instructions are the only current guides to writing style in informal correspondence. Handbook

25X1

☐ Correspondence Style and Procedures, is used throughout the DD/I to guide the mechanical aspects of format.

7. Writing manuals and training facilities are available that are suitable to help the DD/I in a campaign to improve writing.

IV. DISCUSSION:

1. Quantity and type of correspondence

To answer the survey questions, all of the Offices except OSI counted the memos written in a time period ranging from 1 week to 3 months. OSI's editorial staff guessed the yearly volume for OSI.

Since the survey showed that the quantity and type of correspondence varies considerably from Office to Office, we analyzed the information from each Office separately. Annex C contains the detailed analysis for each of the Offices.

The estimated number of memos for each Office is:

Office of the DD/I and Staffs	468
OCR	47,424
OO	12,532
ORR	10,972
OBI	5,568
OSI	3,000
ONE	360

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The Offices write for a variety of purposes, and about diverse subjects. However, OCR, OO, ORR, and OSI all write significant proportions of their memos about administrative support, to supply information or to request services. OCI, ONE, and OBI write more long, substantive, analytical memos. Of the few memos that are written in OCI and ONE, relatively large proportions are addressed to the DD/I, DD/CI, or DCI. OCR writes the shortest memos -- 99% are one page or less in length.

2. Quality of writing in sample memos

Several of the Office representatives with whom we discussed the problem hesitated to answer question 8, which requests an opinion. Those who did answer question 8 said that style of expression could be improved most frequently, and that organization could sometimes be improved.

In evaluating style of expression, we found that some samples from every office had a Fog Index too high to permit a college graduate to understand the language. The fog resulted from different causes in different Offices. In OSI, OCR, ORR, OO, and OBI, the high Fog Index resulted from the excess words and stereotyped phrases of Federalese. Some examples of phrases from the sample memos are:

Phrase

Suggested Improvement

Assistance in connection with  
Pursuant to your request  
This office has noted the following  
We are in agreement therewith  
Inasmuch as  
Transmitted herewith are

Help  
As you asked  
We note that  
We agree  
Because  
Attached are



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In OCI and ONE, the long substantive memos had extremely high Fog Indexes, but the style was not stereotyped. The high Fog Indexes were the result of complex sentences and academic words.

The organizational snags that occurred were similar in the different offices. The most common were long or inaccurate titles, failure to separate sub-topics, and the inclusion of too many details.

In format, most of the sample memos were acceptable, but the thermofax copies provided by some offices were almost illegible. If the poor copies are an isolated circumstance of this study, this is not a serious problem. We believe, however, that many analysts must read illegible copies.

**3. Current guides and procedures**

The Offices have no organized policies about the writing style of informal correspondence. The miscellaneous instructions by the AD's and the DCI's directives on organization are helpful guides, but they are not thorough enough to achieve consistent clarity in all writing. The editorial staffs have no control over informal correspondence.

Some writing style manuals have been distributed in some DD/I Offices, but there are no procedures for ensuring that writers apply the principles. In fact, the representatives of some Offices expressed the opinion that prescribing matters of style would lower the quality of writing by stifling originality.

We believe that the wide ranges in readability of the memos written within each Office reflect uncertainties on the part of the writers as to what style is preferred in DD/I writing.

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4. Training facilities

The Office of Training offers 2 writing courses to improve general writing skill. Both of the courses cover points that would correct the flaws we found in the informal correspondence, but both are more comprehensive than would be necessary to correct those flaws alone. Since August 1954, 157 DD/I employees have completed <sup>one of</sup> the 2 courses.

The General Services Administration, National Archives, offers a 16-hour course emphasizing simplicity in informal correspondence. Any government agency may obtain the instructional materials for the course. However, the examples are of a more routine type of correspondence than that written in the DD/I Offices.

V. CONCLUSIONS

1. There are specific and widespread flaws in the memos written in the DD/I Offices. One common flaw is over-formal and wordy style; another flaw is poor organization. The DD/I should initiate a campaign to eliminate these flaws.

2. Some long substantive memos are hard to read. We need to take specific action to make these memos easier to read, because they are hard to read for different reasons than are the administrative memos, and they are read by senior officials who are extremely busy.

3. The diversity of types of memos precludes establishing rigid format and organizational rules, but writers need more unified guides than those that exist. A brief guide to writers in establishing organizational and format features should be prepared.

4. The flaws in informal correspondence can be corrected by less drastic measures than requiring all writers to take writing courses; the flaws in informal correspondence can be corrected by less drastic measures than requiring all writers to take writing courses.

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and their audiences, rather than from illiteracy on the part of the writers. Training should be specifically adapted to the needs of some Offices, as recommended in the Office reports.

5. Because the correspondence situation is different in different Offices, we must recommend some action specifically to each Office.

VI. RECOMMENDATIONS:

A. General

To improve writing style, we recommend that the DD/I

1. Address a copy of Air Force Manual 11-3 to every Intelligence Officer in the DD/I Offices, with a covering note calling particular attention to Chapters 4 and 5. Annex D contains a draft covering note.

2. Instruct all writers to prepare a summary and place it at the beginning of any substantive memo more than 3 pages long.

To unify and clarify matters of organization and format,

1. The DD/I should publish a brief guide incorporating the miscellaneous directives on format and organization, with additional suggestions as to the best organization and format for specific types of memos. The guide should be distributed to both writers and secretaries.

B. Specific to Offices

1. The AD/CR, AD/RR, AD/BI, and AD/SI should instruct all Division, Branch or Section Chiefs to edit all correspondence written in the Division, Branch, or Section for a period of 1 week. The Chiefs should select memos that are particularly well-written or poorly written as examples to inform the writers how they should

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2. The AD/CI and the AD/NE should emphasize the DI/I's instructions to place a summary at the beginning of all substantive memos over 3 pages long, as particularly applicable to their Offices.

3. In addition, the following action should be taken by the individual AD's:

AD/CR: a. All OCR personnel who write memos should be instructed to read "Plain Letters".

b. The Library, Graphics Register, and Documents Division should continue to use form letters. They should eliminate duplicate form letters. They should also study all form letters and revise some of them to improve simplicity and clarity of style.

c. The AD/CR should announce a policy to cut down the amount of informal correspondence, by conducting intra-Branch and Section business orally whenever possible.

AD/00: a. 00 should continue to keep its informal correspondence as informal as possible, using the diary, note and letter forms now in use.

b. 00 should condense and publish some of the principles of clear writing style in the guides for formal reports, stressing their application to informal writing in all Divisions of 00.

c. The AD/00 should reiterate these principles, and the principles of informality, as a policy, communicating the policy to all levels where informal writing is done.

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AD/RR: a. The sections of "The Writing of Reports" that deal with style and organization should be called to the attention of all writers in ORR. They are applicable to informal correspondence as well as to formal reports.

AD/BI: a. OBI should devise form memos for correction requests.

b. OBI should inform all of its writers that the fog level is high in some memos and that they should economize on words.

AD/SI: a. The AD/SI should instruct writers and reviewers of writing to use an informal style for informal correspondence.

b. OTR should tailor a brief writing seminar for senior personnel of OSI, stressing simplicity of style.

c. The senior officials of OSI should consider reducing the number of copies on distribution lists for informal correspondence.

d. OSI should instruct typists to use only the first carbon for Thermofax reproduction.

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3. Office of Operations

4. Office of Research and Reports

5. Office of Basic Intelligence

6. Office of Scientific Intelligence

7. Office of National Estimates

8. Office of Current Intelligence

D

Draft Covering Note for DD/I to Send AF Manual 11-3  
to all Intelligence Officers.

CIA INTERNAL USE ONLY

ANNEX A

14 December 1956

Memoranda Survey

1. What regulations, guides, and editing procedures are currently applied?
2. How many memoranda does each Division (Branch) write per week?
3. What proportion is written for a general audience (wide dissemination), and what proportion is written for a specific audience?
4. Where do the memoranda go?
  - a. within the office
  - b. to DCI, DDCI, DDI
  - c. to other DDI offices
  - d. other.
5. How long are they?
  - a. one page or less
  - b. 2 to 3 pages
  - c. more than 3 pages.
6. What is their content?
  - a. substantive explanation
  - b. substantive facts
  - c. administrative support
  - d. planning recommendations.
7. Why are they written?
  - a. in response to a standing requirement
    - to report activities
    - for a substantive publication
  - b. to fill a non-routine need
    - to supply information
    - to request services
    - to recommend action.
8. Which attributes could be improved most in the memoranda written in your office?
  - a. organization
  - b. style of expression and presentation
  - c. format (arrangement and typing)
  - d. content selection
  - e. other.

ANNEX B

CRITERIA FOR READABILITY

I. The Fog Index

The fog index is one of the simpler readability formulas now being used. It takes account of two elements in style. The first is the number of ideas the reader must deal with in one unit, and the second is the difficulty of the ideas. We obtain the number of ideas per sentence by counting the number of words per sentence, and the difficulty by counting the number of words more than 3 syllables long, since long words are usually difficult words.

You can derive a fog index as follows:

1. Give each word that can be pronounced in one or two sounds a value of 1.
2. Give each word that is pronounced in more than two sounds a value of 3.
3. Count the number of elements for each sentence separately. Take any complete statement of thought as a sentence; consider a semi-colon or a colon as a period when making a fog count.
4. Count only 1 element for proper names, place names, dates, numbers and abbreviations even though they are pronounced in more than 3 sounds.
5. Compute the average fog count per sentence.
6. If the average fog count is 20 or more, divide by 2 to get the fog index, which is the grade level of reading difficulty. For example, if the average fog count is 24, the fog index is 12, and the reading level is 12th grade.
7. If the average fog count is less than 20, subtract 2 and then divide by 2 for the fog index.

A fog index higher than 16 indicates difficult reading for a college graduate. Harper's Magazine and the Atlantic Monthly never permit the fog index for their articles to exceed 16.



The advantage of the fog index is that it is objective. Some other considerations, although they are generally accepted as criteria for good writing, are subject to more errors of judgment than the fog index.

## II. Other Style Considerations

In evaluating style, we consider the following factors in addition to the fog index:

1. Language should be as direct and simple as possible, with no unnecessary words.
2. Active verbs should be preferred to passive verbs.
3. Sentences should vary in length.

## III. Organization and Format

The organization and format, as well as the style, should be adapted to the subject, length and purpose of each particular memo.

For good organization and format,

1. The title or statement of the subject should be brief, complete, and accurate. The title should describe all of the content of the memo as specifically as possible.
2. Facts and arguments should be arranged in a logical order, with clear subtitles in long memos.
3. Paragraphs should vary in length, but they should be neither too long nor too short.
4. Transitional cues should provide continuity between different paragraphs or sections.
5. In format, indentation should be consistent and should be based on organization.

6. Format arrangement should be similar for similar types of memos, so that the reader can depend upon finding the identifying information about the memo in the same place.

7. Lists or series of numbers should be presented in tabular form.

8. Margins should not be less than one inch.

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Informal Correspondence

ANNEX C-1

DD/I's Immediate Office and Staffs

I. Summary

The DD/I's immediate office and the Staffs write a reasonable number of memos, mostly to readers outside the DD/I area. Most of the memos are 1 page or less in length. High Fog Indexes were found for some of the longer memos.

II. Quantity

1. Estimated Volume

The Office of the DD/I estimates that it wrote 39 memos during the month of January, 1957. Assuming that that month is typical of the memo production, it is estimated that the Office of the DD/I writes about 468 memos each year.

The percentages of memos written by the various parts of the DD/I's immediate office and Staffs in the period surveyed are:

DD/I Immediate Office	46
Field Coordination Staff	3
Assistant to DD/I (Admin)	18
Senior Research Staff	20
All other	13

2. Purpose, subject, length and readers

Three-fourths of the memos are about administrative support matters, mainly written to supply information or to request services. Ninety-five percent are written to fill a non-routine need, and 5% in response to a standing requirement.

The Office of the DD/I writes 92% of its memos to a single addressee. Seventy-four percent of the memos are 1 page or less in length.

Most of the readers are outside the DD/I area. 10% are read within the office, 8% are read by the DCI, DD/ST and the DD/I, 15% by other

### III. Quality

The administrative support memos we inspected were easy to read, well-organized, and with reasonable Fog Indices.

The longer, more complex memos had extremely high Fog Indices. These memos were similar to the substantive memos written in OCI and ONE.

### IV. Current Guides and Procedures

The Office of the DD/I uses no specific written guides or editing procedures. They comply with the general Agency procedures, which are covered in various correspondence manuals.

### V. Conclusions

1. The types of informal correspondence written in the DD/I's immediate office and the Staffs are similar to the types written in other DD/I offices.

### VI. Recommendations

1. No separate action is recommended for the DD/I's immediate offices and Staffs. The recommendations in the Staff Study apply.

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ANNEX C-2

Informal Correspondence  
Office of Central Reference

I SUMMARY

OCR writes a very large volume of informal correspondence, chiefly to request services or to supply information. The Library, the Graphics Register, and the Document Division write almost 75% of OCR's memos. They use many form letters for routine requests.

Most of OCR's memos are about administrative support or substantive facts. Those that are about substantive facts are transmittals rather than analyses of the facts. The memos are short, usually less than one page long, and a large percentage is addressed to readers outside OCR.

The titles of the memos are generally clear, and the fact that the memos are so short minimizes other organization problems. In format, the memos are acceptable, except that the thermofax copies are hard to read. In style, the memos vary from excessively short sentences to excessively long ones, and the samples show several examples of gobbledegook.

OCR's current procedures and policy on writing style consist in complying with the AD's well-known preference for simple, direct and clear writing.

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II QUANTITY

1. Estimated Volume

OCR estimates that it wrote 912 informal memos during one week in January 1957. Assuming that the week surveyed is typical for OCR's memo production, it is estimated that OCR writes about 47,424 memos each year.

Form memos are used for a large proportion of this correspondence. For example, it is estimated that about 75% of the CIA Library's correspondence is conducted by form letters or memos.

The percentages of the total OCR memo production written in each division are as follows:

Office of the AD	3
CIA Library	33
Liaison Division	11
Document Division	16
Industrial Register	5
Biographic Register	3
Graphics Register	24
Special Register	3
Machine Division	2

2. Purpose

Most of OCR's memos are written to request services or to supply information. Those written to request services meet standing, routine requirements.

The percentages of memos each division writes for different purposes are shown on following page.

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Purpose	Office of									OCR Total
	AD	LY	LD	DD	IR	BR	GR	SR	MD	

Standing Requirement:

To report activities For a substantive publication	10	3	10	17	10	33	1	9	10	7
	-	-	-	-	-	-	14	-	-	3
To request services	10	67	30	66	10	17	9	36	10	41

Non-routine:

To supply information	50	30	30	17	80	50	75	45	20	43
To recommend action	30	-	30	-	-	-	2	9	60	6

The table shows that the large proportion of memos written by the Library and Documents Division to request services accounts for the importance of this purpose in OCR's total. The Industrial Register and the Graphics Register write mainly to supply information. The Biographic Register appears to do much writing to report activities, but it should be remembered that it writes a very small number of memos.

3. Subjects

More of OCR's memos are about substantive facts or explanation than administrative support.

The percentages of memos each division writes on 4 subjects are as follows:

Subject	Office of									Total
	AD	LY	LD	DD	IR	BR	GR	SR	MD	
Substantive Explanation	10	3	40	83	40	-	-	-	-	22
Substantive Facts	10	5	50	13	40	83	99	77	-	40
Administrative Support	50	92	10	3	20	17	1	13	90	37
Planning recommendations	30	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	10	1

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Although the divisions appear to vary widely as to the most frequent subject matter of their memos, the samples we have examined suggest that they are very similar. The discrepancies in the table probably reflect differences in interpretation of "substantive" rather than true differences in the nature of the correspondence. For example, the Biographic Register, the Graphics Register, and the Document Division report that most of their memos consist of substantive reports. The samples from these divisions are about substantive matters, but they are primarily administrative transmittals of substantive documents or films. The samples from these 3 divisions are quite similar to those from the Library, which reports that 92% of its memos are administrative support.

4. Length

During the period surveyed, 99% of OCR's memos were 1 page or less in length, and 1% were between 2 and 3 pages long. No memos were more than 3 pages long. These percentages vary only slightly in the different divisions.

5. Readers

Ninety six per cent of the memos have only one addressee, and 4% have more than one addressee. The Industrial Register and the Special Register are the only divisions that write memos to more than one addressees.

A very large percentage of OCR's memos go outside OCR, either to other DD/I offices, DD/P offices, or outside agencies.



C-O-N-F-I-D-E-N-T-I-A-L

The percentages addressed to various places by each division are as follows:

To Whom Addressed	Office of AD	LY	LD	DD	IR	BR	GR	SR	MD	OCR Total
Within OCR	50	-	10	3	20	17	3	9	80	7
DCI, DD/CI, DD/I	27	-	5	13	-	-	-	-	-	4
Other DD/I Offices	20	17	50	17	20	33	47	-	10	23
Other	3	83	35	67	60	50	50	91	10	62

The only division that writes most of its memos to stay within OCR is the Machine Division, and it writes a very small number of memos.

### III QUALITY

#### 1. The Samples

There are 46 sample memos, including 7 form letters. There are 7 samples from the Library; 6 from Documents Division, including 2 form letters; 2 from the Office of the AD, including 1 form letter; 6 from the Biographic Register; 19 from the Graphics Register, including 4 form letters, and 6 from the Industrial Register. There are no samples from Liaison Division, the Special Register, or the Machine Division.

#### 2. Organization

Since most of OCR's memos are very short, the main organizational considerations are whether the title is descriptive and the purpose of the memo is stated clearly.

The titles are clear, brief, and informative in almost all of the memos. A small number of the samples from the Library and from

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the Biographics Register require re-reading more than once to learn why the memos were written. These memos seek to persuade the reader that specific courses of action should be followed, without describing the proposed course of action clearly.

3. Format

The arrangement of the print is generally acceptable in OCR's memos, although the side margins should be wider in some memos.

Many of the thermofax copies are hard to read, but all of them are legible with some effort by the reader.

4. Style of Expression

The style and the fog index vary considerably from memo to memo.

Of the 46 samples, 22 have fog indexes below the danger line of 16. Ten of the samples have fog indexes that are 16 or higher, and 14 of the samples consist of listings or of only one sentence, not appropriate for determining the fog level. The samples with high fog levels include 1 from the Office of the AD, 2 from Industrial Register, 2 from the Library, 2 from Graphics Register, and 3 from Biographic Register.

Most of the samples from the Library and from the Graphics Register are notable for their low fog level. Many memos have fog indexes of 9 or less. This can reduce reading ease as much as a high fog level, because uniformly short choppy sentences give a disorganized effect.

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The samples from every division show some stilted phrases and excess words. Most of the faults result from use of the third person and passive verbs. Even in the samples with very low fog indexes, the language is often awkward. These faults are evident in the form letters, which should not have been written hastily.

Some examples of stilted phrases and suggested re-writes are:

<u>Phrase</u>	<u>Suggested revision</u>
This organization believes	We believe
Pursuant to the request of ST/PC	As ST/PC requested
Transmitted herewith	We enclose
It is requested	Please
Your assistance in our behalf	Thank you for your help
is much appreciated	
Their continued receipt is	
requested	Please send us more

The Graphics Register samples include two different form letters for requesting films. One of the letters is clear and direct in style, and the other is badly written; they contain almost identical information. Copies of the two samples are attached to Appendix I.

#### IV CURRENT GUIDES AND PROCEDURES

Secretaries in OCR use the Correspondence Handbook as a guide to format. Several style manuals have been circulated widely in OCR, but there is no one official guide for writing style in informal correspondence.

The AD/CR prefers a brief, concise and direct writing style. All OCR writers know his preference, and comply with it whenever he sees the writing.

Several divisions of OCR use form letters to cut correspondence

~~C-O-N-F-I-D-E-N-T-I-A-L~~

V CONCLUSIONS

1. OCR's large volume of short memos that are similar in purpose justifies additional steps to improve writing style.
2. The large differences in style among memos indicate that to be most effective, additional action should be initiated at the branch level or section level.
3. OCR's wide use of form letters cuts correspondence costs.
4. It is possible that some of OCR's memos could be eliminated by personal or telephone contact.

VI RECOMMENDATIONS

1. All OCR personnel who write memos should be instructed to read "Plain Letters".
2. Each branch and section chief should initiate a campaign to improve writing, by editing all correspondence written in his branch or section for one week. He should select memos that are particularly well written or poorly written as examples to inform the writers how they should write.
3. The Library, Graphics Register, and Documents Division should continue to use form letters. They should eliminate duplicate form letters. They should also study all form letters and revise some of them to improve simplicity and clarity of style.
4. The AD/CR should announce a policy to cut down the amount of informal correspondence, by conducting intra Branch and Section business orally whenever possible.

ANNEX C-2

~~C-O-N-F-I-D-E-N-T-I-A-L~~

ATTACHMENT I - Graphics Register Form Letter No. 1

Date:

TO :  
FROM :  
SUBJECT : Procurement of Motion Picture Film  
REF :

1. It is requested that the following 16mm motion picture film (s) be procured on a basis

2. Source from which the above may be obtained is:

3. Costs incurred in pursuance of this request may be charged to Graphics Register funds.

GR/

C-O-N-F-I-D-E-N-T-I-A-L

ANNEX C-2

ATTACHMENT I - Graphics Register Form Letter No. 2

Date \_\_\_\_\_

GR Ref. F \_\_\_\_\_

TO :

FROM :

Please arrange to obtain the following film (s) on a

\_\_\_\_\_ basis:

Priority: \_\_\_\_\_

The above is available from:

C-O-N-F-I-D-E-N-T-I-A-L

~~C-O-N-F-I-D-E-N-T-I-A-L~~

ANNEX C-3

Informal Correspondence  
Office of Operations

I SUMMARY

The volume of OO's informal correspondence is large, both to its own field offices and to other Agency components. More than half of its informal correspondence is written to supply or to request information. Most of the correspondence is one page or less in length, and addressed to only one destination.

The organization, format and style are good in about 2/3 of the sample memos. Some improvements in style or organization could be made in the remaining samples.

II QUANTITY

1. Estimated volume

The Office of Operations estimates that it wrote 241 memos in the week 14-18 January 1957. Assuming that the week is a representative index of OO's memo production, it is estimated that OO writes about 12,532 memos each year. However, 28% of OO's total memo production consists of correspondence between Contact Division and its field offices. Of course, Contact Division must transact much routine intra-Division business in writing, while other DD/I offices can transact such business in person or by telephone.

2. Purpose

The table below shows the percentage of memos written for different purposes in each Division of the Office of Operations.

~~C-O-N-F-I-D-E-N-T-I-A-L~~

## C-O-N-F-I-D-E-N-T-I-A-L

<u>Purpose</u>	<u>Office of AD &amp; Sovmat Staff</u>	<u>FDD</u>	<u>OO/C</u>	<u>Total</u>
For Standing Requirement	19	28	4	10
To supply information	43	56	65	59
To request information or services	5	14	28	22
To recommend action	33	3	4	9

25X

The purposes "to supply information", "to request information or services", and "to recommend action" are all defined as routine, recurring correspondence. The table shows that every Division writes more than half of its memos to supply information. The Office of the AD and the Sovmat Staff write a larger proportion of memos to recommend action than the Divisions.

3. Subject

The table below shows the percentages of memos written about different subjects in each Division of OO.

<u>Subject</u>	<u>Office of AD &amp; Sovmat Staff</u>	<u>FDD</u>	<u>CD</u>	<u>OO Total</u>
Substantive Explanation	24	22	31	30
Substantive Facts	71	17	55	48
Admin. Support	5	53	13	19
Planning Recommendations	-	8	-	4

25X1

Except for FDD, all of the Divisions write more than half of their memos about substantive subjects. FDD writes a larger proportion of memos about administrative support.

4. Length

For the Office of Operations as a whole, 84% of the memos are one page or less in length, 13% are from 2 to 3 pages long, and 3% are more than 3 pages long. These proportions are similar within



C-O-N-F-I-D-E-N-T-I-A-L

each division, except that FDD reports a slightly higher proportion (92%) of memos that are one page or less in length. The Office of the AD and Sovmat Staff write slightly longer memos -- they report that 62% are one page or less, 33% are from 2 to 3 pages long, and 5% are more than 3 pages long. The variations in length are related to the differences in subject matter; i.e., it would be expected that memos about administrative support would be shorter than memos about substantive matters.

5. Readers

It is estimated that 90% of OO's memos have only one addressee, while 10% have more than one addressee. Where the memos are addressed is shown in the table below, in percentages for each division.

<u>Addressee</u>	<u>Office of AD &amp; Sovmat Staff</u>	<u>FDD</u>	<u>OO/C</u>	<u>Total</u>
Within the office	5	61	50	51
To DCI, DDCI, DDI	24	3	-	3
To other DDI offices	5	11	15	11
Other (DDS & DDP)	67	25	35	36

More than half of the memos written within the divisions stay within OO. More of OO's memos are to the DD/S and DD/P than to DD/I offices.

III QUALITY1. The samples

There are 26 samples; 1 written in the Office of the AD, 4 in Sovmat Staff, 7 in Contact Division,  and 7 in FDD.

~~C-O-N-F-I-D-E-N-T-I-A-L~~

About half of the samples are substantive in content and half are administrative. In length, 17 of the samples are 1 page or less; 9 are 2 or more pages long.

2. Organization and Format

Most of the sample memos are well-organized, with descriptive titles and a clear sequence of ideas. Of the 26 samples, 3 are one-line memos, too short for analyzing organization in the broader sense. Six of the remaining 23 samples could be improved in organization by clarifying the title or re-arranging the content. Two of the memos that could be improved were written in the Sovmat Staff, 2 in Contact Division,  and 1 in FDD. The chief organizational defect in these 6 memos is incomplete or misleading titles.

25X

The format of all of the memos is acceptable. Indentation and listings are generously used to aid readability.

3. Style of Expression

Ten of the samples are written in unusually lucid and direct style. Of the remaining 16 memos, 8 have a fog level of 16 or above, beyond the danger line for comprehensibility.

CURRENT GUIDES and PROCEDURES

The Office of Operations is against memos, particularly stilted ones, and there is no consistently used guide for informal correspondence. Writers use whatever format and organization seem appropriate. Of course, for correspondence going outside the Office, OO conforms to readers' expressed preferences when they are known.

~~C-O-N-F-I-D-E-N-T-I-A-L~~

~~C-O-N-F-I-D-E-N-T-I-A-L~~

Secretaries sometimes refer to the Correspondence Handbook, but the Divisions of OO vary as to procedures and usage.

Contact Division's Field Collectors' Handbook discusses clarity and organization in writing.

25X1

[ ] informal correspondence is governed by [ ] Communications". In addition, [ ] has prepared a guide for secretaries titled "Correspondence Procedures" to supplement the Correspondence Handbook. Neither of the [ ] Regulations is concerned with writing style itself.

25X

25X

25X

The Chief of FDD publishes brief notices from time to time to guide writing style for FDD reporting.

V CONCLUSIONS

1. OO's informal correspondence is genuinely informal, and the informality is good correspondence practice, since it permits adaptation of style, format and organization to particular situations within each Division.

2. The large volume of the informal correspondence justifies some additional action to improve the organization and style of writing. Steps should be taken to apply uniformly the principles of clarity set forth in the reports manuals.

3. Issuing periodic reminders to writers probably achieves better writing.

~~C-O-N-F-I-D-E-N-T-I-A-L~~

~~C-O-N-F-I-D-E-N-T-I-A-L~~

**VI RECOMMENDATIONS**

1. OO should continue to keep its informal correspondence as informal as possible, using the diary, note and letter forms now in use.
2. At the same time, it should condense and publish some of the principles of clear writing style in the guides for formal reports, stressing their application to informal writing in all Divisions of OO.
3. The Office of the AD should reiterate these principles, and the principles of informality, as a policy, communicating the policy to all levels where informal writing is done.

~~C-O-N-F-I-D-E-N-T-I-A-L~~

ANNEX C-4

INFORMAL CORRESPONDENCE  
OFFICE OF RESEARCH AND REPORTS

I. SUMMARY

ORR writes a large volume of informal correspondence although the number of memos written by most of the individual divisions and staffs is small. Most of the correspondence for the period surveyed is nonroutine in purpose, written to supply information or to request services. The Office of the AD and the Staffs write mainly about administrative support while the Geographic and Economic Research Areas write substantial proportions of their memos about substantive matters. ORR's memos are predominantly one page or less in length. Almost half of the memos are addressed to readers within ORR; about half are to other DD/I Offices, DD/P Offices, or outside Agencies; while 4 per cent go to the DCI, DD/CI, or DD/I.

The quality of the writing, both in style and in organization, is good in many of the sample memos. However, some memos are poorly organized, and some are too wordy.

II. QUANTITY

1. Estimated Volume

ORR wrote 211 informal memos during the period of 18-22 March 1957. Assuming that this period is representative of ORR's memo volume, it is estimated

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that ORR writes about 10,972 memos each year. ORR reports that this is an underestimate of the actual volume since the survey covered a week in the middle of the month and the volume is usually higher during the first and last weeks of a month.

The additional correspondence during the first and last weeks of the month, not covered by the survey, includes monthly progress reports and other reports prepared on a time-period basis. This should be remembered in analyzing the tables below showing purpose, subject, and content of the memoranda surveyed. The true proportion of memos written for standing requirements is probably greater than the tables show. We will not speculate as to the subject, length, content, or distribution of the additional memos.

The number of memos written in one week and percentages of the total production for the three broad organizational units of ORR are as follows:

Unit	Number	Per Cent
Office of the AD and Staffs	115	54
Geographic Research Area	52	25
Economic Research Area	44	21

Fifty-four per cent of ORR's memos are written in the AD's immediate office or in the five staffs directly under the AD. The Intelligence Information Staff

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produces 20 per cent of ORR's total memo output, and the Admin. Staff produces 15 per cent.

Within the Geographic and Economic Research Areas, the volume of informal correspondence written by each Division or Staff is small. The Photo. Intelligence Division of the Geographic Research Area produced 24 memos in the week surveyed, more than any of the other Divisions. The Map Library wrote 18 memos during the week, or 9 per cent of the total ORR memo production. Services Division is third among the Divisions in volume of memo production--it wrote 16 memos in the week surveyed, or 8 per cent of ORR's total memo production. Each of the remaining Divisions in Geographic and Economic Research Areas wrote a small number of memos.

In the analysis which follows of the purposes, subjects, readers, and length of the memos, detailed breakdowns of percentages for each division and staff are not shown because the divisions within the areas show similar patterns and the number of memos written by each division is small. Exceptions to the patterns are noted in the text.

## 2. Purpose

The memos surveyed were written for several purposes, with larger proportions written for the

- 4 -

nonroutine purposes to supply information and to request services. The table below shows the percentages written for each purpose in each of the three Areas of ORR.

Purpose	Office of AD & Staffs	Geographic Research Area	Economic Research Area	ORR Total
<u>Standing Requirement:</u>				
To report activities	4	6	18	8
For substantive publication	8	0	5	6
<u>Nonroutine:</u>				
To supply information	37	42	30	37
To request services	29	35	18	28
To recommend action	22	17	27	22

The pattern that can be observed in the table of proportions of memos written for each of the five purposes reflects to a great extent the patterns for the divisions as to purpose. There is one exception to the pattern: The Administrative Staff writes 72 per cent of its memos to supply information, 16 per cent to request services, and 12 per cent to recommend action. All of the Administrative Staff's memos are written to fill nonroutine needs; none are written in response to standing requests.

### 3. Subjects

As would be expected, more of the memos written within the Economic and Geographic Research Areas deal



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with substantive facts or explanation than those written in the Office of the AD and the Staffs. The Office of the AD and the Staffs write primarily about administrative support.

The percentages of memos each of the Areas writes for four broad subjects are shown as follows:

<u>Subject</u>	<u>Office of AD &amp; Staffs</u>	<u>Geographic Research Area</u>	<u>Economic Research Area</u>	<u>ORR Total</u>
Substantive explanation	7	17	14	11
Substantive facts	6	31	20	15
Administrative support	79	50	52	66
Planning recommendations	8	2	14	8

Two Divisions that write more memos than others, Services Division of the Economic Research Area and the Map Library of the Geographic Research Area, write mainly about administrative-support matters.

#### 4. Length

ORR's memos are predominantly one page or less in length. The percentages of memos of different lengths are as follows for each of the three Areas:

<u>Length</u>	<u>Office of AD &amp; Staffs</u>	<u>Geographic Research Area</u>	<u>Economic Research Area</u>	<u>ORR Total</u>
1 page or less	80	88	61	78
2-3 pages	16	10	25	16
More than 3 pages	4	2	14	6

The Economic Research Area tends to write longer memos than the other Areas. The survey statistics

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indicate that Services Division, the Current Support Staff, and the Planning & Review Staff write the longest memos.

### 5. Readers

A large proportion, 85 per cent, of ORR's memos are addressed to one person while 15 per cent have more than one addressee. The number of copies on the distribution lists ranges from two to eight, depending upon the content of the memos.

Where the memos are read is shown below, in percentages for each area:

<u>To whom addressed</u>	<u>Office of AD &amp; Staffs</u>	<u>Geographic Research Area</u>	<u>Economic Research Area</u>	<u>ORR Total</u>
Within ORR	39	27	77	44
DCI, DD/CI, DD/I	5	4	0	4
Other DD/I Offices	28	15	5	20
Other	28	54	18	32

The Economic Research Area writes most of its memos for readers within ORR. About half of the Geographic Research Area memos go to other agencies or to DD/P offices. There are more differences among the three Areas in readership than in subject, purpose, or length.

## III. QUALITY

### 1. Samples

There are 34 samples: 7 from the Geographic

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15 from the Office of the AD and the Staffs. It is unfortunate that we have no samples from the Map Library and only one sample from the Photo. Intelligence Division since both these Divisions contributed relatively large numbers of memos to ORR's total during the period of the survey.

There are samples from all the Divisions of the Economic Research Area, and they seem to be well chosen as typical since they are consistent with the survey data.

There is a generous number of samples from the Office of the AD and the Staffs. We have no samples  from the Intelligence Information Staff.

25X

## 2. Organization

All of the 34 samples except six are clearly organized. The organization could be improved in one memo, written in the Office of the AD and signed by the DD/I, to the DD/S concerning the recruitment of professional economic personnel. The recommendations in this memo should be separated from the supporting details.

A memo of appreciation written in the Materials Division could be improved in tone and clarity by

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stating the purpose of the memo in the first sentence rather than at the beginning of the second paragraph.

Two memos written in the Industrial Division, one about a conference on Soviet Bloc shipbuilding and the other about an ATIC request for information, overflow with details. The details may be essential, but they should be grouped in a more orderly fashion.

The over-all organization of the sample memo from Photo. Intelligence Division about a source of current map information on the Soviet Arctic is good, but the items of information within paragraphs could be arranged in a more orderly fashion.

One memo from the Geography Division inviting participation in technical discussions on Gravimetry and Geology elaborates details for a complete page before the reader learns its purpose. The purpose in this memo should be stated first, then elaborated upon.

3. Format

The sample memos have generally legible formats although several would be easier to read if the margins were wider.

4. Style of Expression

Some samples from every division and staff are written in a direct and lucid style. Some samples from

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every division and staff show traces of gobbledegook. Of the 35 samples, 15 have a fog index higher than the danger line of 16. Phrases such as "transmitted herewith" and "this office interposes no objection" recur to increase the verbiage without improving the meaning.

#### IV. CURRENT GUIDES AND PROCEDURES

The only guide for writing informal correspondence in ORR is the Correspondence Handbook, used by secretaries to prepare format.

The Economic Research Area's Publications Staff edits all of ORR's formal publications. The Publications Staff wrote a research aid entitled "The Writing of Reports," dated 31 August 1956, to guide writers of formal reports in research methods, organization, and style of expression. The writing style in formal reports has improved since the research aid was published. Writers know that the Publications Staff edits according to its principles.

As another step to improve writing, the Chief of the Publications Staff recently taught a course in report writing for ORR analysts.

The Publications Staff does not directly control ORR's informal correspondence. Three kinds of informal correspondence originate in ORR: the Internal Project, the Miscellaneous Project, and administrative support memoranda.

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Neither Internal Projects nor Miscellaneous Projects were included in the samples for this study.

V. CONCLUSIONS

1. ORR's large volume of informal correspondence is generally well written, but the writing in some cases could be improved.
2. The correspondence produced by the different Staffs and Divisions does not vary greatly as to purpose, subject, length, and readers. Therefore, the same guides for organization and style could be applied in different divisions of ORR.

VI. RECOMMENDATIONS

1. All Division and Branch Chiefs should initiate a campaign to improve informal writing by personally editing all informal correspondence for a period of one week. They should select good and poor examples of writing for circulation within their staffs.
2. The sections of "The Writing of Reports" that deal with style and organization should be called to the attention of all writers in ORR. They are applicable to informal correspondence as well as to formal reports.

ANNEX C-5

INFORMAL CORRESPONDENCE  
OFFICE OF BASIC INTELLIGENCE

I. SUMMARY

OBI's Editorial and Publications Divisions write many memos. The other divisions of OBI write few memos. OBI's memos vary in purpose, but their subject is most often substantive NIS material. Between 1/2 and 1/3 of the memos are more than one page long, and OBI's memos are read mainly by limited audiences either within OBI or in IAC agencies contributing to the NIS.

OBI's memos are generally well organized. Their format is adequate for readability except for some memos such as itemized correction requests, where tabulations should be margined and arranged more neatly. Their style of expression could be improved by using shorter words and sentences in some cases.

II. QUANTITY

1. Estimated Volume

OBI estimates that 1,392 informal memos were written between 1 July 1956 and 30 September 1956. Assuming that this estimate is an index of a year's production of memos, OBI writes about 5,568 memos each year.

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Of the total memos written, Publications Division writes 46 per cent, the Editorial Division writes 41 per cent, the Regional Division writes 10 per cent, and the Office of the AD/BI writes 3 per cent.

## 2. Purpose

The table below shows the percentage of memos written for each of five different purposes by each division of OBI.

Purpose	Office of AD/BI	Pub. Div.	Reg. Div.	Edit. Div.	OBI Total
<u>Standing Requirement:</u>					
To report activities	13	1	100	4	13
For a substantive publication	-	23	-	82	44
<u>Nonroutine:</u>					
To supply information	51	17	-	7	12
To request services	-	58	-	2	28
To recommend action	36	-	-	5	3

The table shows that OBI as a whole writes about equal proportions of memos to meet standing requirements and to meet nonroutine needs. However, the divisions differ considerably in the purposes for which they write memos. The Publications Division writes for both standing requirements and nonroutine needs while the Regional Division writes only to report activities, and the Editorial Division writes a large proportion of its memos for the NIS.



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3. Subjects

The table below shows the percentages of memos each division writes on each of three broad subjects.

<u>Subject</u>	<u>Office of AD/BI</u>	<u>Pub. Div.</u>	<u>Reg. Div.</u>	<u>Edit. Div.</u>	<u>OBI Total</u>
Substantive facts or explanation	91	91	84	82	87
Administrative support	2	4	14	14	9
Planning recommendations	7	5	3	4	4

Most of the memos written in all divisions of OBI deal with substantive subjects. That is, most of the informal correspondence is about NIS schedules, meetings, contributions, and corrections although it consists of description rather than substantive analysis.

4. Length

The percentage of memos of different lengths each division writes is shown below.

<u>Length</u>	<u>Office of AD/BI</u>	<u>Pub. Div.</u>	<u>Reg. Div.</u>	<u>Edit. Div.</u>	<u>OBI Total</u>
1 page or less	64	63	50	48	55
2 - 3 pages	33	35	37	35	35
3 pages or more	2	2	13	17	9

About one-half to one-third of the memos written in all OBI divisions are two pages long or longer. In view of the AD's expressed preference for memos he

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signs to be one page long or less, this is a rather high proportion. The memos signed by other people may be longer than the AD would like them to be because many of them deal with NIS problems that cannot be stated as briefly as simple administrative support matters could be stated.

#### 5. Readers

Most of the memos are addressed to one specific unit or person. The percentages are shown below.

<u>Addressee</u>	<u>Office of AD/BI</u>	<u>Pub. Div.</u>	<u>Reg. Div.</u>	<u>Edit. Div.</u>	<u>OBI Total</u>
Single	96	98	96	7.	87
Multiple	4	2	4	20	13

Where the memos are read is shown below, in percentages for each division.

#### To whom addressed

Within OBI	36	3	96	73	41
To DCI, DDCI, DDI	22	-	-	-	1
To other DDI Offices	22	17	-	3	10
Other	20	80	4	25	48

The divisions vary greatly regarding to whom their memos are written. While the Regional and Editorial Divisions write memos mainly to be read within OBI, the bulk of the Publications Division's correspondence is to other Agency offices or to other IAC agencies. The Publications Division, of course, must correspond with NIS contributors.

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### III. QUALITY

#### 1. Samples

The samples include four from the Office of the AD/BI, five from the Regional Division, seven from the Publications Division, and none from the Editorial Division. Since the Editorial Division writes about 41 per cent of the memos in OBI, the sample does not completely cover OBI's memo production. However, 73 per cent of the Editorial Division's memos stay within OBI so that only OBI personnel must read them.

Six of the 16 samples are about administrative matters, and 10 have substantive subjects. The samples vary considerably in purpose, hence in format and organization.

#### 2. Organization

The titles of the memos are all clear, accurate, and brief. The ideas are organized in some logical sequence or order although an Office Notice on Time and Attendance Reports is quite differently organized from the minutes of a planning conference for an NIS.

The memo writers in OBI show awareness of the journalistic approach, stating clearly who, what, where, when, and why.

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3. Format

Arrangement on the page and general legibility range from poor to excellent in the sample memos.

The format is good or excellent in all the textual memos. Three Publications Division memos requesting series of corrections for graphics material are difficult to read because the margins are very narrow, and the spacing and indentation are uneven. A Regional Division Review of NIS-12 is also badly arranged. These tabulated reports, of course, are harder to type than straightforward text.

4. Style of Expression

The style varies considerably from memo to memo, depending partly on the subject and length of the memo. The fog index ranged from 12.8 in a request for a Printone Lithoplate to 31.0 in a survey of combined Chapters VII. The fog index was higher than 16 in five of the nine samples. The five samples could have been written more simply by cutting out some phrases, shortening sentences, and using simpler words.

IV. CURRENT GUIDES AND PROCEDURES

The Correspondence Handbook and DCI directives govern the preparation of memoranda. In writing to other IAC

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agencies, OBI often uses the format preferred by the addressee. The GPO Style Manual and the NIS Instructions guide the preparation of NIS's.

Informal memoranda to or through the AD/BI are limited to one page, according to the AD's wish. Some senior officials request completed staff work so that style or phrasing changes by people other than the original writer are kept to a minimum.

V. CONCLUSIONS

1. The large volume of memos written in Publications Division and Regional Division could be reduced by using form memos for some subjects.
2. Some reading time could be saved if writers would use shorter and fewer words.

VI. RECOMMENDATIONS

1. OBI should devise form memos for correction requests.
2. OBI should inform all of its writers that the fog level is high in some memos and that they should economize on words.

ANNEX C-6

INFORMAL CORRESPONDENCE  
OFFICE OF SCIENTIFIC INTELLIGENCE

I. SUMMARY

OSI writes a substantial amount of informal correspondence, chiefly for administrative, nonroutine purposes. Most of the correspondence is less than one page in length. Most of its readers are outside DD/I offices.

OSI's informal correspondence has a rather uniform style of expression--gobbledegook. Organization is also frequently poor. The available copies are virtually illegible, which suggests that the reproduction processes used in OSI are inadequate. The distribution lists of from seven to nine OSI units for many memos indicate that copies of each memo are read by several people within OSI.

II. QUANTITY

1. Estimated Volume

OSI estimates that it writes roughly 3,000 informal memoranda and letters each year. The Fundamental Sciences Division apparently writes a considerable proportion of OSI's informal correspondence.

All of the figures in this report are rough estimates and are not based on actual counts for a specified period of time. OSI does not have readily available records for such counting.

2. Samples

The samples include five from the AD/SI, two from the Secretary of the Scientific Estimates Committee, six from OS, five from IPS, and ten from the Fundamental Sciences Division. The quantitative estimates as to purpose, subject, length, and readers are based entirely on 28 samples and not on actual counts for any period of time.

3. Purpose and Subject

Seventy-nine per cent of OSI's memos are written for administrative, nonroutine purposes, either to supply information or to request services. Fourteen per cent are written in response to a standing requirement, and the remaining 7 per cent are written to recommend action. About half the memos deal with administrative subjects; the other half are about substantive matters or planning recommendations.

4. Length

Most of the memos are one page or less in length. Seventy-one per cent are one page or less, 21 per cent are between two and three pages long, and 7 per cent are over three pages long.

5. Readers

All of OSI's memos are addressed to a single addressee. Three per cent are addressed to readers

- 3 -

within OSI, 7 per cent to the DCI, DD/CI, or DD/I, 29 per cent to other DD/I offices, and 61 per cent are addressed to other addressees. "Other" probably consists mainly of correspondence between OSI and its contractors or DD/P offices and other IAC agencies.

The distribution list for copies includes between seven and nine units for most of the sample memos. Therefore, many people within OSI read each memo even though it has only one addressee.

### III. QUALITY

Since the quantitative estimates above are based entirely on the 28 samples and not on an actual count, there is no clue as to how representative the samples are.

#### 1. Organization

Of the 28 samples, eight are well organized enough that only minor improvements can be suggested. In 11 of the samples, the organization is poor enough to require rereading for the reader to understand them.

Two frequent organizational defects handicap the reader's speed and comprehension. One organizational snag in several of the samples is poorly stated subjects. Some subject titles are too long and involved to help the reader. Others contain virtually no information. For example, the subject of one memo is "Approval in principle, request for . . ."



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Another organizational snag is failure to state the purpose clearly at the beginning of the memo. Often the reader must plough through several paragraphs of comments before he learns the subject.

2. Format

The sample copies are almost illegible. If OSI analysts must read copies so poorly reproduced as these, it would be economical to spend several thousand dollars to improve reproduction processes. The saving in reading efficiency would amount to several thousand dollars each year.

Most of the sample memos show a distribution list of from seven to nine copies within OSI. This suggests that the reproduction either by carbon copies or by some other process is important to several readers.

3. Style of Expression

Twenty of the 28 samples have fog indexes lower than the danger line of 16. This suggests that long sentences and words are not prevalent. However, the low fog index reflects the use of short sentences and not economy of expression. In fact, the memos are filled with the classic phrases of gobbledegook. Here are some examples and suggester briefer statements:

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<u>Example</u>	<u>Suggested Revision</u>
Transmitted herewith are	Here are, attached are
This office has noted the following	We note that
Indigenous personnel	Natives
Assistance in connection with	Help
Pursuant to your request	As you asked
Provide an opportunity	Help, encourage, let
We are in agreement therewith	We agree
Inasmuch as	Since

OSI memo writers also use parenthetical expressions freely. For example: "A direction-finding activity, either from a single point in  or (more efficient and effective) from a point in  . . . "

This sample sentence demands at least one rereading to learn what the writer recommends.

25X  
25X

Repetitive phrases also appear. For example, "to interpret and give meaning to" is clearly redundant since "interpret" means "to explain or tell the meaning of."

Finally, hedging statements can sound downright insulting. One writer states: "The report gives an accurate account in the areas it purports to cover." What does he mean by the phrase "purports to cover"?

#### IV. CURRENT GUIDES AND PROCEDURES

There is a general disdain for memoranda in OSI. For informal correspondence, the only guides used are the Correspondence Handbook and the OTR Stenographers' Handbook. A small editorial staff edits formal OSI publications, and this staff is preparing a set of Publications Standards.

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V. CONCLUSIONS

1. OSI needs a firmer policy to encourage an informal writing style for informal correspondence.
2. Readers within OSI probably lose much reading efficiency because of illegibly reproduced copies.

VI. RECOMMENDATIONS

1. The AD/SI should instruct writers and reviewers of writing to use an informal style for informal correspondence.
2. OTR should tailor a brief writing seminar for senior personnel of OSI, stressing simplicity of style.
3. The senior personnel who participate in the writing workshop should then review all informal writing in their divisions or branches for one week, selecting particularly clear writing as examples to inform the writers what style is desirable.
4. OSI should instruct typists to use only the first carbon for Thermofax reproduction.
5. Division and Branch Chiefs should consider reducing the number of copies on distribution lists for informal memos.

ANNEX C-7

INFORMAL CORRESPONDENCE  
OFFICE OF NATIONAL ESTIMATES

I. SUMMARY

ONE writes few informal memos. Samples of its substantive informal memos are well organized, and their format is legible. The style of expression is highly academic, with many long words and sentences. They are difficult to read.

II. QUANTITY

1. Estimated Volume

The Estimates Staff of ONE estimates it wrote 30 informal memos between 1 January and 1 February 1957. Assuming that January was a typical month with regard to memo production, it is estimated that ONE writes about 360 memos each year. This is a very small volume of informal correspondence compared to the volume of other DD/I offices.

2. Purpose, Subject, Length, and Readers

About half of the memos written by the Estimates Staff are substantive in content and purpose. They include "little NIE's," prepublication papers to be incorporated into the formal NIE's. The other half of the Estimates Staff's correspondence is about administrative support matters, written to supply

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In length, 67 per cent of the memos are one page long or less, 17 per cent are from two to three pages long, and 17 per cent are more than three pages long.

The DCI, DDCI, and DDI read 27 per cent of ONE's memos. Audiences outside the DDI offices read 46 per cent of the memos, and readers within ONE read 27 per cent of the memos. About 60 per cent are addressed to more than one person, and 40 per cent are addressed to one reader.

### III. QUALITY

The samples are three "little NIE's" addressed to the DD/I and DCI. All are more than three pages long.

They are well organized, but they are long enough and complex enough to provide difficult reading. Their format is legible.

The three sample memos are written in a consistently academic style. Their fog indexes are at grade levels 21.3, 22.2, and 24.0. These are well above the danger line of 16.0 for incomprehensibility. It should be noted that the high fog level in the memos is due to the use of long, academic words and sentences describing complex situation evaluations. The problem is not gobbledegook--it is complexity of subject matter combined with excessive scholarliness.

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IV. CURRENT GUIDES AND PROCEDURES

ONE does not use written guides or regulations regularly. Of course it conforms to the expressed wishes of its readers regarding format and organization.

The staff chiefs demand good writing and return any paper that is not perfect to be rewritten. Since writing is a major part of ONE's activity, the ability to write is a basic qualification for employment in ONE.

V. CONCLUSIONS

ONE's memos are hard to read since the style is complex, like the subjects and purposes of the memos. Providing a capsule version of long memos would improve the reader's understanding of ONE's analyses.

VI. RECOMMENDATIONS

ONE should instruct writers to place a summary at the beginning of any substantive memo more than three pages long.

ANNEX C-8

INFORMAL CORRESPONDENCE  
OFFICE OF CURRENT INTELLIGENCE

I. SUMMARY

OCI writes very few informal memos. Those written are well organized, and the format is good. The style of some of the substantive memos could be improved by shortening sentences and words.

II. QUANTITY

1. Estimated Volume

OCI writes very few informal memos. The Area Divisions wrote 15 substantive memos in the six-week period beginning 2 January and ending 13 February 1957. The Administrative Branch reports that 33 administrative memos were written in 1956. Combining the two categories, it is estimated that OCI writes about 164 informal memos in a year.

2. Purpose, subjects, length, readers

a. Substantive

All of the substantive memoranda were written for a general audience, i.e., members of the intelligence community. None were prepared for dissemination within OCI alone.

Six went to the DCI, DD/CI and the DD/I only,

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while nine also went to other DD/I offices and ten to other components of the Agency, to the White House, State Department, etc. One memorandum was one page, nine ran two pages, and five were over three pages long.

The memoranda were written to fill a nonroutine need and to supply information, usually at the initiative of the responsible area analyst but sometimes at the request of the DD/I or a requester outside CIA.

b. Administrative

The rest of OCI's memos are about administrative support matters, and they are written in response to standing requirements, to supply information. They consist of such items as announcements of assignments to key positions and holidays. They are distributed to more than one addressee. The majority are less than one page long.

III. QUALITY

The samples include five administrative memos and four substantive memos. One of the substantive memos is a form memo for preparation of election forecasts.

All of the samples are well organized, and their

format is legible.



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The style of expression of the administrative memos is clear and direct, with a fog index between 10 and 15. The substantive memos have a complex and somewhat academic style except for one sample. The fog index ranges from 15.9 to 24.1 for the four substantive samples. Three of the four samples are above the danger line of 16.

#### IV. CURRENT GUIDES AND PROCEDURES

The Editorial Division is responsible for all of OCI's formal substantive writing. It prescribes the style for the OCI daily and weekly publications and edits them. It has published a brief guide for the mechanical aspects (such as capitalization) of these publications. However, it does not always edit the informal substantive memos.

The Correspondence Handbook guides the preparation of OCI's informal correspondence. Aside from the Handbook, there is very little interest in how the memoranda are written. The AD and everyone else in OCI is primarily concerned about the substantive publications.

#### V. CONCLUSIONS

1. OCI has no major problems concerned with the readability of memos.
2. Some informal substantive memos are hard to read because the sentences are long and the subjects complex.

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However, the fact that one of the substantive memos is written in a much simpler style than the others shows that the verbiage can be reduced.

V. RECOMMENDATIONS

OCI should require writers to place summaries at the beginning of substantive memos over three pages long.

ANNEX D

DRAFT COVERING NOTE FOR SENDING AF Manual 11-3  
TO ALL INTELLIGENCE OFFICERS

In a recent study of the writing in our informal correspondence, several examples of the overformal, stereotyped style of Federalese were discovered.

We should keep our memos, notes, and letters brief and informal. I recommend that you read the attached Air Force Manual for suggestions on clear writing. Chapters 4 and 5 are particularly pertinent to our informal writing.

Robert Amory  
Deputy Director/Intelligence